

LOVE'S GREAT REASON

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"We love him, because he first loved us."
1 John 4:19

THIS is the point where all genuine Christians meet. They can all say, without exception, "We love him." They do not agree in doctrine, it is a pity, but what they did, but I suppose that, so long as we are in this body, we shall none of us see all the truths at once, and each man, seeing only a portion of the truth is most likely to think that what he does not see is not true, whereas it may be just as important as that which he is able to perceive.

Well, well, amidst a thousand controversies between Calvinism and Arminianism, and all the forms that various systems have taken with regard to this, and that, and the other, still, all the elect of God, being quickened by divine grace, unite in this one declaration, "Whatever we do not believe, we do love Him."

There are great diversities of experience, as well as of doctrine. Some are down in the gloom, and some never seem to leave the cellars of the Lord's house, they have deep spiritual exercises, they doubt, they fear, they tremble, and are afraid. Others climb up to the very roof of the Palace Beautiful, and look abroad upon the fair scene around. Their feet are used to dancing with spiritual delight, and their hearts sing sweetly before the Lord. Theirs is an experience of communion rather than of corruption. They have been with Jesus and their faces are made to shine with His company.

Perhaps if I told my experience, it might differ from yours from an experiential point of view, in that we might stand wide as the poles asunder, but if we are in Christ, we can, each of us say with equal truth and intensity, "We love him." There we join hands. Whatever we have not felt, and tasted, and known, we *do* love Him.

And you will notice too, in this short expression that there is a force, a power in it, principally derived from the fact of the personality of this love. "We love *him*." You know, to love an "it" is hard work. It seems contrary to the nature and all the instincts of love. Love ever seeks a living person to grasp. But when it is put "we love Him," it reads so naturally that we feel that we can love, through the force of the divine nature within us, with all the vitality and intensity of our godliness.

We can love Him—that blessed Son of God, that condescending One, that sacrificing, dying Lamb, that ascended, reigning, coming Savior, towards whom our hearts are drawn out. "We love him." Depend upon it, we must have more preaching about the person of Christ, and our hearts must assume more and more a trustfulness and affection towards Him. A merely doctrinal religion is pretty sure to degenerate into bigotry, an experiential religion will sooner or later sink into gloom.

Understand what I mean. I am not speaking either against doctrine or experience. On the contrary, I would say all I could in favor of both, and they do enter into all men's lives who live near to Christ, but still make either the one or the other the great master-thought, brood over either of them, contend for them, live for them, throw your whole force into them, and you may degenerate.

But when you live as unto Him, when He is the truth that you believe in, when He is the way that you tread, when He is the life that you experience, and when the doctrine, and practice, and experience all meet in Him as lines in a center, then you shall not be degraded, you shall not degenerate, but you

shall rise, you shall go from glory to glory, being changed by the presence of the Lord. “We love him,” then.

But I must make one observation before I plunge into the text, namely, that in order to love this blessed person, being a person, it is clear to everyone who thinks, that there must, first of all, have been some acquaintance with Him, and then some deep conviction concerning His excellency. We cannot love whom we do not know or esteem. If we know nothing about Christ, have no understanding of Him, have not in any degree occupied our minds with Him, we may talk about love to Him, but it will be mere talk.

And after we have known Christ, by the reading or hearing of the Word, blessed to us by His Holy Spirit, it will be needful for us to be brought into an admiring confidence in Him, believing that He is the altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand, worthy of all our reliance, worthy of all our adoration and service. Then it is, when knowledge has produced faith, that faith gives birth to love.

I make this remark because I have sometimes noticed that, in addressing Sunday school children, it is not uncommon to tell them that the way to be saved is to love Jesus, which is not true. The way to be saved for man, woman, or child is to trust Jesus for the pardon of sin, and then, trusting Jesus, love comes as a fruit. Love is by no means the root. Faith alone occupies that place.

And I think I have heard young persons, too, talking always about the question, “Do I love the Lord or no?”—a very proper question, but it is not the first, but the second. The question that should always come first is, “Do I *trust* the Lord or no? Do I rest entirely in what He has done for me? Am I depending upon Him for eternal life and salvation?” If that first question be answered, the second will not long remain a matter of doubt, but if you begin with the second, and neglect the first, you may involve yourselves in very serious consequences.

The great Gospel precept is not, “Love Christ,” but “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”—not that love is less than faith, but that love, though, perhaps, first in point of excellence in some respects, comes second in point of order, and that faith is first to be looked to in the soul, and then love will inevitably and necessarily follow.

But now to come to the text. I shall treat the first sentence as *the great general confession of the whole church*—“We love him,” and the second sentence as *the most glorious reason for that love*—“because he first loved us.” I am not going to preach this evening, but only to stir you up about these points.

I. THE GREAT GENERAL CONFESSION, “WE LOVE HIM.”

Now, if you are a child of God, you will say, or if you do not say it, it will be true, “We love him.” As sure as ever you have passed from darkness to light, whether you are an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or a Baptist, or whatever you may be, you will agree with this utterance of the one mouth of the one church. We all, without exception, who have believed in Him, love Him.

But how do we love Him? We love Him, first, *not at all as we ought to love Him*. We confess that much with shame—and *not at all as we wish to love Him*. Our conception of what is due to Christ is, no doubt, very short of what is due to Him, but we fall short even of our own conception. I am afraid that many of us are like the children at school, who have a good, fair copy set them at the top of the page, and the next line is written to imitate the copy, and the next imitates the imitation of the copy, and as it gets to the bottom of the page—alas! poor writing—how unlike it is to the perfect copy at the top!

So what is due to Christ stands at the top, what I believe about Christ in my best moments stands next, what I actually give to Christ comes next to that, and then far down the page how badly do I write, and how far do I fall short of what my love knows I ought to give Him!

*“Yes, I love Thee and adore,
Oh! for grace to love thee more!”*

Now, remember, we never make ourselves love Christ more by flogging ourselves for not loving Him more. We come to love those better whom we love by knowing them better, not by talking to ourselves about the duty of loving them, for love and duty, somehow or other, do not work well together. I mean that to talk of love being squeezed and pressed out by duty is not at all congruous. Love is like the generous first drops of the honeycomb—the virgin honey which drips spontaneously because the comb is full to bursting. Such is true, genuine love.

If you want to love Christ more, think more of Him, think more of what you have received from Him. Study His character more in the Word, draw oftener near to Him in prayer, live more in holy fellowship with Him. These are the kindlings that shall make that oven blaze. This is the secret fuel that shall make our soul on fire with love to Jesus. We do not love Him as we ought, nor as we wish.

But for all that, in the next place, *we do really love Him*. The devil tells us we do not, but when it comes to close quarters we can turn to one who knows better than the devil, and we can say, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” What a mercy it is that Jesus Christ does not believe our actions, for they very often say, “Jesus, we do not love You.”

But He reads our hearts, and our hearts still beat with this, “Oh! my God! in my very soul I do love Christ, and if it were possible I would never sin against Him, oh! wretched man that I am, that I should live so contrary to my true life, and that the thing that I would I do not, and what I would not that I do, for I find this law in my members, bringing me into captivity. For I have tasted of freedom, and am indeed, free, and will not be the servant of any, but will be the espoused one, the free espoused one of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Yes, we do really love Him.

And we also, if we be saints at all, *love Him practically*. We delight—and that is the true standard and gauge of the man—in that in which He delights. We delight in His service, in His company, in His friends. There is nothing—I feel sure some of us can say this without egotism—there is nothing that makes our soul feel so full of bliss as when we have opportunities of glorifying the name of Jesus Christ, and if we had the offer of all the kingdoms of the world, and but a grain of glory put into our hand that we might give to Christ—we would sooner have it than all the wealth of the Indies, and all the royalties of all the empires. To glorify Christ is a lasting treasure which shall abide with us when the world is on ablaze. To teach one little child the name of Jesus, to bring the tear into its little eye about the dying Lord, is better and sweeter work to us than statesmanship itself could be if it were dissociated from Him.

*“Is there a lamb amongst Thy flock
I would disdain to feed?
Is there a foe before whose face
I’d fear Thy cause to plead?”*

Some of you are very busy preaching for my Lord, and I know that when you are preaching your main desire is that He may be extolled in your hearers’ hearts. Do you not pine and sigh after this? Would you not give up all the graces of oratory, and talk in the most vulgar style, if need be, if you could win a soul for Him thereby? I know you would, my brethren, for this is all the true minister’s desire.

And you too, who have been standing in the streets today, preaching at the corners, I hope—nay, I feel it must be so with you if you are His at all—that you spoke out of love to His dear name, and when you would have preferred to have been silent, it was love that unloosened that tongue of yours. Do you not wish you could speak better? Do you not wish you could command attention better? And it is all for Him, for His dear sake, that you might paint Him better before the eyes of men.

And you, dear teachers in the classes, you who have been engaged in the Sunday school, if you are right at all, and I trust you are, you have been teaching because you wanted to make Him famous, and to let Him see of the travail of His soul. And you who cannot come to the school, but have been praying for your children, and talking with them, you who have been dropping your pence into the box, and have

each been trying to do your share of something for the Master—well, if His life be in your hearts, and His blood be sprinkled on you, you can say that you desire to do all this as a practical evidence that you so love Him. All the works that you have done today, done in His Spirit, have been a repetition of this verse, “We love him.”

Now, will you do the same in your ordinary lives, for in this I fear we sometimes fail? As a servant, live as one who loves Jesus. As a master, as a workman, as a merchant, as a man of retirement and property, still let this be the guide of your steps, the order of your life, the model by which you shape your conversation, “We love him.” Let every breath prove it, let every heaving of the lungs, every motion of the tongue and of the hand prove the great and blessed reality of the fact that we love Him.

Brethren and sisters, we can go a step further, I trust we love Jesus Christ, not only really and practically, but we *love Him supremely*. That point has often vexed good hearts. They have said, “I cannot say that I love Jesus Christ better than father, or mother, or husband, or wife, or child.” No, you cannot say it, and there are a great many things we cannot say, which it were better not for us to say, which would be immodest for us to say, but they may be true for all that. They who are beautiful talk not of their beauty, and those who love most are usually the most diffident about their love.

Now, you cannot contrast loves the one to another, as you can contrast five to eight, and say which may be the greater. It is not an arithmetical problem, but I will put it to the proof with you in this way—if you had to lose that dear husband, or else lose Jesus Christ, what would you do? Why, it does not take two minutes to consider. You would not put them in the scale together for a single second. He stands, out of sight, above all husbands and dearest wives. We cannot consider Him in such a relation as that.

Or put it thus, if you had to give up your hope of heaven and your interest in Christ tonight, or to lose all that you have—which would you do? Why, I think you would not need to go into that little chamber to calculate. “No,” say you, “all that I have, why it is so little, it is a thing of care to me, and if it were not, if I had more, as I should be very glad to have that I might give up more, I would put it all away and say, ‘Lord, I have left all that I might follow Thee, but in leaving it, I did but gain a greater consciousness of Thy love to me, and a far greater and deeper enjoyment of that love.’”

Sometimes, however, some of you young people get an opportunity of showing which you love best—whether you do love Jesus better than all things else, or not. In the case of marriage, that test often comes. And ah! how lamentable is the fact that many a young sister, and many a brother too, will break through Christ’s law, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” I know this is a perplexing and solemn point, mark you. You do, in fact, give Christ up when you take that ungodly man, and you, young man, when you seek after that Christless woman, you deny your Lord and Master, as far as you can do it, you deny Him, and give Him up for the sake of earthly pleasures.

For such an act as that, your conscience may well prick you, and if you be, indeed, the Lord’s servant, the rod will follow you, and in your household the Lord’s hand will go out against you as long as you live. You there came to the test, and could not stand it. But I hope there are many, many here who could say, “Yes, with everything that beauty could present to attract my heart, and all that wealth could lay at my feet to win my regard, with all that honor could put before me to dazzle my desires, I feel that I must obey my Lord and Master, I must be a chaste virgin unto Him, and give myself to Christ, and to Him alone.” We love Christ, brethren—I trust we do—supremely.

“We love him,” also, *always*. The love of a believer to Christ is not a thing of Sundays, nor of public meetings and prayer meetings. “We love him”—it is the utterance of the man sitting at the writing desk penning a letter, or standing in the market selling his corn, or on the Exchange, dealing in his shares and stocks. “We love him.” Our love is not a spasm, it is not a mere emotion, a thing of excitement. It does not, like the salamander, live in the fire, but then die, when the fire dies out. “We love him,” soberly, steadily, constantly, persistently, after a real, and serious, and businesslike spirit. “We love him”—it is intertwined with our daily life, it is part of our inmost being, it flows in the blood, it breathes in the lungs, it is everywhere about us, and we could as soon cease to exist as to cease to be lovers of Christ. I mean, of course, if we be, indeed, the saved sons of God. We love Him, then, constantly.

And yet another thing, dearly beloved, *we love Him increasingly*. We do not always think so, but it is true, if we are right with God. We love Him more than ever. When we are first converted we think we shall love Jesus Christ a great deal more than we really prove to do, and much of that love afterwards departs, but it is only the superficial and half-fictitious love that vanishes.

See! Mary is lighting the fire, and as the straw or paper takes light at the bottom, what a great blaze there is! No sooner is the match put to it than the flames rush up the chimney. But come again in half an hour, why, there is not half the blaze, nor any crackling, nor noise! But is there less heat? Why, see, the coals have caught, and the whole grate has become one glowing mass of fire. There is not half the blaze and the crackling, but there is more real, solid heat.

And so is it with the growing believer. At the first there is much of excitement, much of novelty, but afterwards there is the steady, calm warmth of a glowing soul. I can only say, brethren, that if we do not love Christ growingly we ought to do so. He is one that grows upon believers. The more they know Him, the better they must love Him. The longer is their experience of His faithfulness, and His fullness, and freeness, and goodness, and greatness, the deeper, and firmer, and broader, and higher ought to be their love of Him, and I trust that it is so.

And another thing—we love Him, *and we are not ashamed to love Him, and we are not ashamed to confess it, and we do not blush to bear the shame which may come to us after the avowal*. Ah! perhaps I am addressing some here—I do not know where they are—who love my Lord, but they have never said so. Oh! you that are on the rock, in the secret places of the stair, come forth, and let Him hear your voice, for that voice is sweet to Him, and your face is comely in His eyes. Oh! be not ashamed to confess that you love Him. There is nothing in it of which to be ashamed.

It might make an angel proud to be permitted to love Christ, and to declare his love. Ashamed of saying that I love Him? No! let the earth hear it, and let it rage, let hell hear it and let it boil over with fury, yet is He such a One that as I cry, “I love Him,” I feel it to be the grandest, greatest statement that grace can enable us to make. Yes, never in any circumstances make this a thing to be shy about, but avow it in your actions, and declare it by your public profession, “We love him.”

Brethren, we bless God that the day is coming *when we shall love Him best of all*. This tenement of our body is falling away by degrees, these fetters of the flesh are rusting off, we shall soon be free and when the emancipated spirit shall see Him without a veil to hide Him, then shall our love to Him be perfected, Or if He comes ere our death arrives, we shall see Him as He is, and shall be like Him, and then too, shall our love rise to its transcendent maturity.

It is a mercy that while other loves die like lilies broken at the stalk, or fall like rosebuds when they burst and are full-blown, our love to Christ shall go on forever and forever increasing, and when heaven and earth shall pass away, immortal love, eternal love, shall still abide. As long as God exists, the love of God shall be shed abroad in us, and our hearts shall continually love Him in return.

I might pause here to say—if it is true that you love Him, dear brethren and sisters—love His people better, love His poor better, love His cause better, love His truth better, love poor blood-bought sinners better, love the assemblies of His saints better, love His Word better, keep His commandments better, draw nearer to Him, aim to be more like Him. May these practical truths, though unspoken by me, yet be lived out in your conversation.

But now for the second head. We can only afford a few minutes upon it, but it is a subject which might well occupy eternity in our meditation—

II. THE GLORIOUS REASON FOR OUR LOVE.

“*We love him—because he first loved us.*” It is personal again, you see, personal again. “We”—“Him”—two persons—and here is the reason for it—“because he first loved us”—persons again. We do not love Christ because the minister preached, or we received his doctrines, or because we can understand that such and such things are in our Lord’s teachings, but the reason for the love springs from Himself, as it goes out after Himself. It is because of something that He did, and something that He said, prior to anything that He did.

"We love him, because he *first* loved us." Love is the cause of love. He loves—we love. We love second and after Him, because He loves first and before us. He *first*. Now, that is an experiential truth. We know that He loved us before we loved Him. Just look back on your life before conversion. He loved you then. What made you love Him at all? It was because you were told that He loved you, and you believed it. Law and terrors never made you love Him, they hardened you. It was a sense of blood-bought pardon that dissolved you, and you saw the love of Christ in that pardon, and so you could not help loving Him in return.

This is no novelty, this is no mere theory, it is a great truth. I pray you turn it over. Jesus loved you when you lived carelessly, when you neglected His Word, when the knee was unbent in prayer. Ah! He loved some of you when you were in the dancing saloon, when you were in the playhouse, ay, even when you were in the brothel. He loved you when you stood at hell's gate, and drank damnation at every draught. He loved you when you could not have been worse or further from Him than you were. Marvelous, O Christ, is Your strange love! What love is this that shone on us when we were the serfs and slaves of Satan, the scullions in the kitchen of iniquity, when nothing was too hard for some of us to do if we might but sin, and yet He loved us!

And others there were of us who were as bad as this—proud, hypocritical, rotten hearted professors, who were boasting of our own self-righteousness, as proud as Lucifer, when there was not even a good thing in us, and yet we were loved with His great love, wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in trespass and in sins, blessed be His name!

Now, that is a matter of experience, and it is also a matter of our firm belief and joyous confidence that Jesus loved us before that—in that tremendous day, the center of the two eternities, the end of one dispensation, and the beginning of the next—that day in which the sun was darkened, and yet for the first time began to shine, that day in which the earth did shake, and heaven was established, that day in which the dead arose, and the thoughts of men were discovered, in that day, when He, the appointed Substitute, went up to Calvary with all the sins of all His people upon Him, piled like a tremendous world, when, like another Atlas, He bore that overwhelming load upon His shoulders, and afterwards heaved the whole infinite weight into forgetfulness.

In that day He gave the supreme proof of His love to us. Look at those eyes red with weeping, see how He loves! Look at those cheeks defiled with the filthy spittle, and bruised where the fists of the scoffers smote Him! See how He loved!

Look to that dear head, still scarred with the jagged wounds of the thorn crown of thorns, look to that matchless mouth, and that tongue so parched, look to the whole face so marred as to be sorrow's dwelling place, look to the whole body so utterly agonized, and tortured, and languishing, look to the tender, gracious hands—those crimson fountains tell the tale, look at the feet—those scarlet rivulets declare how deep is His love.

Ay, look to His side, set abroach by the soldier's spear—that precious stream of blood and water declares with double and indisputable force that Jesus loves, and we were not born then, we were not here—He loved us first.

But this grand old Book bids us go farther back than that day. He loved us when, in the garden, our first parents spoiled us all, and a promise was given that He should come to bruise the serpent's head. Ay, when yonder mountains were infants, when the grey old world and its ruins that speak of ages were as yet but newly formed, ay, and before that—before the sun's great flame was lit by the divine torch, ere stars began to whirl in their all but boundless revolutions, when time was not, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days, and He dwelt alone, the infinite JEHOVAH—even then Jesus loved His people. His prescient eyes had seen them, His sovereign choice had separated them, His distinguishing grace had discriminated them, and His eternal purpose had decreed them to be His forever and ever. He loved us first.

Well, if this is not a good reason for loving Him, where could such reason be found? He first loved us. Oh! cold hearts! Oh! slabs of marble! Oh! blocks of granite! Oh! icebergs! if we melt not now, when

will we melt? He loved us first! That glorious thought like fire rushes through and through, and through our very deepest nature, and refines it, and sets us all on a glow. We *must* love Him, because He *first* loved us.

Words fail me to speak about that love of His. It was a love so condescending that He stooped from heaven to reach us, laid aside the royalties of glory, and took upon Himself the infirmities of earth. It was a love so lasting that the ages have never dimmed it, nor lessened it by so much as a single atom. It was a love so enduring that the ten thousand provocations of our unbelief and of our sin have never quenched it. Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it.

It was a love so generous that Jesus gave us all, He gave us even His Father and His God, for did He not say, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God"? He gave us, and He gives us this day, Himself. He gives us communion with Himself, He gives us His blood to wash us, He gives us His righteousness to clothe us, He gives us His life for our example, His throne for our rest at the last.

Oh! generous love, nothing do You withhold! You reserve nothing for Yourself, You give all to the beloved object. It was a love that was quite disinterested. Jesus had nought to gain. The gain was ours. It was a love most self-sacrificing. His sufferings, how intense! His griefs, how terrible! And all for His sweet love of us who were His enemies!

I would I had a seraph's tongue but for one moment, a tongue of flame with which to speak of my Master! As I cannot have this, I must be content to say that this ocean of Christ's love is one that is not to be measured. Plunge into it. Ask that you may be swallowed up in it. Pray that it may baptize you, that you may be lost in its overwhelming floods and that henceforth for you to live may be Christ and to die may be gain.

Brethren, the Lord's love be over you, and in you, and in the power of His quickening Spirit may you live through another week, and when we come together again may our hearts retain some of the glow of the affection which I trust we have felt burning within our hearts tonight. To His name be praise! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 8:26-39

Verse 26. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

Our weaknesses, our insufficiencies, our inabilities, the Spirit of God comes in to be a helper to the children of God.

26. *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought:*

We do not know our own infirmities. Perhaps we think that we are strong, where we are exceedingly weak. The Spirit of God spies out the infirmities, and puts the help where the strength is required. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought."

26. *But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Those great things in prayer that we cannot ask for, which can never be expressed in human language, the Holy Ghost translates into groans, and so we are made to groan when we cannot speak, and those groanings bring us blessings which words cannot compass. Have you been into your prayer chamber lately, pleading with God, and have you felt as if you could not pray? We often pray best when we think that we are praying worst. When there is the most anguish, and sighing, and crying in prayer, there is most of the very essence of prayer.

27. *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

The Spirit knows what we want. God knows what the Spirit is asking for, and so our prayer makes the complete round, and God sends us the blessing.

28. *And we know—*

We know, we are sure of it.

28. *That all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose.*

We know this, for we have proved it in our own experience. "All things work." There is nothing inactive in the providence of God. "All things work together." There is a unity in providence. God sets one thing over against another. Blessed be the name of God, all things work together for good. The purpose of God to His people is good, and only good, and though this or that might be injurious, yet, all put together, they work for good to them that love God.

Come, my soul, do you love God? Can you say tonight, "Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee"? All things work together for your good. Not only shall they work, but they are working, they work now, for your good. And learn another sweet lesson. You are one of those whom God calls, according to the sweet purpose of His electing love, for so it stands, they that love God are the same as those who are called according to His purpose. If you love God, God loves you. Your love to God, poor and faint though it be, is the assured token that He loves you with an everlasting love, and therefore, with bands of loving-kindness has He drawn you.

29. *For whom he did foreknow,—*

That is, look upon with pleasure and delight from before all worlds. Whom He did love and call to be His own.

Christ is *the* man, the archetype. He is not to be a lone man. It is not good for man to be alone, not even for *the* man, and there are to be other men called by God's grace who are to be made like Him, who are to be His brethren. These, whom God foreknew, with fore-love He has ordained, determined, predestinated to be made like His Son.

29-30. *He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:*

Not with the common call with which He calls other men, but with the special call. The hen, when she is about in the yard, keeps on calling, but when she wants her own little ones to come and run beneath her wings, then she has a special cluck for them, and they know it, and they come, and run and hide beneath her.

30. *And whom he called, them he also justified:*

He regarded them as just. He made them just through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

30. *And whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

There is no break in this chain. The foreknown are predestinated, the predestinated are called, the called are justified, the justified are glorified. It is a wondrous chain. He that getteth a hold of it anywhere has a hold of the whole of it, for this Scripture cannot be broken. If you are called by grace into the fellowship of eternal life, you shall be justified and glorified.

31. *What shall we then say to these things?*

I do not know what we can say. Wonders of grace, mountains of mercy, mercy without limit—what shall we say to these things? This, at least, we can say—

31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

A great many can be against us, but we reckon them as nothing at all, if God be for us.

32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

There can be no end to the bounty of God after He has given His Son. He that has given the jewel of the universe, the very eye of heaven—what! will He not give to us all else really needed, and give freely, too?

33-35. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Dear children of God, feed on these words. They are like wafers made with honey, like cold waters from the rock. Eat, drink, and be filled. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

35. *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Well, these things have been tried. As it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." In Paul's day they were being hunted to the death by thousands, and tens of thousands. Were they separated from Christ's love?

The enemy grew tired of persecution before the saints were wearied by it. You remember how, in the days of the Roman Empire, the Christians came to the judgment seat and confessed Christ, even when they were not sought after, as if tempting their enemies to throw them to the lions, or put them to death. They were destitute of all fear, and though Emperors were worse than brutes, these Christians defied them, outbraved them, vanquished them. They could not put down the Christians.

36-39. *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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